

# Media Release

October 2014

## Apprentice Chef of the Year winner announced

TAFE Queensland Brisbane's College of Tourism and Hospitality (COTAH) has announced its 2014 Apprentice Chef of the Year.

Azraa Hayat of Kangaroo Point and apprentice chef at Pony Dining, took out the top gourmet gong at Monday night's industry event held at 66 on Ernest Restaurant at TAFE Queensland Brisbane's South Bank campus.

The finalists were each issued with a mystery box of ingredients to produce one sweet and two savoury canapés, with Azraa's liver pate and raspberry macarons a favourite amongst the 100 guests who were lucky enough to sample the finalists' wares.

Azraa said she's always had a natural curiosity about food.

"Growing up in South Africa, I was exposed to a virtual melting pot of cuisines and cultures," she said.

"At the moment I'm obsessing over Chef Enrique Olvera of Pujol Mexico, who inspires me with his style of reinventing the old and giving it a modern twist."

As the winner, Azraa will embark on a month-long international experience working at a 5-star Accor property in Asia, alongside international chefs and experiencing the diverse culinary offerings of the host city.

"I have aspirations to travel and work and gain those valuable learning experiences so that I can open my own restaurant," Azraa said.

"This trip will really help me on my way towards a rewarding international cookery career."

Awards were also presented to Roberto Madden for the Nick Brida Award for Excellence, Sarah Hockings as Silver Apprentice Chef of the Year and to Bronze Apprentice Chef of the Year, Phuong Nguyen.

The judging panel comprised industry chefs Patrice Falantin, Executive Chef at Sofitel Brisbane, Damian Heads, Owner and Executive Chef of Woodland Kitchen and Bar in Sydney and Samuel McCrystal, Executive Chef at The Summit Restaurant Mt Coot-tha; also, TAFE Queensland Brisbane COTAH teachers Rene Leu and John Perraton.

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